

Task Force on Strengthening the Child Welfare Workforce for Children and Families

Illinois State Capitol,
Room 116
Springfield, IL

Date: October 29, 2019

Time: 10:00a.m.

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT (in person)	MEMBERS PRESENT (via phone)	MEMBERS ABSENT
Sen. Julie Morrison	Paola Baldo	Betsy Goulet (not notified of meeting)
Sen. Steve McClure	Anne Irving	
Sen. Craig Wilcox		
Sen. Robert Peters		
Rep. Mary Edly-Allen		
Rep. Steven Reick		
Rep. Karina Villa		
Rep. Mike Marron		
Royce Kirkpatrick		

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Senator Morrison called the meeting to order and welcomed participants.

II. Introductions

III. Purpose and Scope of Group

An overview of the legislative intent of the task force was provided. Members discussed the scope of the group.

Sen. Morrison presented the idea of including the early childhood workforce, as child care providers are licensed by DCFS. Rep. Reick referred to the legislation, which defines child welfare, and suggested the group stay within the bounds of the public act. Members agreed.

Rep. Reick suggested that the task force take a two-pronged approach: working with local DCFS offices investigator caseloads etc., as well as private vendors. He stated the first thing he would like the task force to do is understand that we are not only dealing with private vendors (purchase of service) agencies, but also the local DCFS offices, with staffing etc. He suggested that the task force divide responsibilities between those two things and that both cannot be done with the same people. He suggested those two topics be split up, having some members work on one aspect and some on other.

Anne Irving suggested that the structure should be such that people who want to explore issues within POS agencies as well as DCFS can do both. She suggested that scheduling of subgroup meetings should allow people to participate in both. Members agreed that this work would not be scheduled at the same time.

Public comment on this topic: Deb McCarrel (ICOY) recommended the task force focus on how the sector recruits and retains staff, new grads etc. She suggested the task force explore how the sector works with universities and community colleges to attract people, prepare them for these job roles and train them well.

Sen. Morrison raised the issue of POS agencies hiring and training staff, who may then leave to go to DCFS for a higher salary, etc.

IV. Review of child welfare terminology, programs and rate setting process

Task force members were provided a document that contained basic job titles and job descriptions for both worker and supervisor level positions within child welfare.

Royce Kirkpatrick (DCFS) provided a review of the rate-setting process. He stated that there are fixed rate contracts for private agencies; those contracts say DCFS pays a set amount for foster home, a set amount for case management of the foster home and another amount for a facility. The contracts provide some standardization around the number of case managers needed to serve a certain number of cases, a certain number of supervisors and an amount for counseling. Foster care contracts incorporate other services needed as a bundled rate.

These are component pieces that are included in the rate, however the rates are still calculated using a model from 20 years ago. After FY10, the state had not provided cost-of-living-allowances (COLA) in 16 of 18 years. A COLA was included in the FY20 budget.

85% of child welfare services are privatized in Illinois. Over time, the rate paid to private agencies has lagged. There are two problems to address – one is staff salaries, the other is the bundle of services needed to do child welfare in 2020. The institution/group home contract has had more recent updates but also uses a dated model. This task force has the opportunity to dive into foster care and residential treatment as the most dated models. For every change to the model, there will be an associated dollar amount for what it costs to annualize that.

Public comment from Deb McCarrel (ICOY): Echoed the statements from Royce; the majority of work done is done by the private sector by design. The private sector needs more support from the state in the form of adequate training, support, lower ratios, resources for families and continuity of care.

Royce will distribute the current rate models to the group.

V. Review of Draft Rules of Procedure/By-Laws

The group reviewed draft rules of procedure. Rep. Reick asked if the rules could grant the task force access to local DCFS offices.

Stefanie Polacheck (DCFS) explained that the bylaws define how the task force itself operates and cannot grant such access, but visits/discussions could be arranged through the Department's Legislative Affairs team.

Rep. Marron motioned for the passing of the rules; Rep. Reick seconded. The rules of procedure were approved as drafted.

VIII. Next Steps

Task force members agreed to postpone setting the remainder of meeting dates until the legislative schedules have been released (in approximately two weeks).

Stefanie noted that Tamara Fuller from the Child and Family Research Center at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is developing a methodology for the data and literature piece of this task force's work, and it should be available for review at the next meeting.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:12a.m.